

Appl. No. : 09/643,172

Responsive to an Office Action mailed on June 24, 2004

Amendment filed on October 25, 2004

REMARKS

Claims 15, 17–27, 29–34 are pending. Applicants gratefully thanks the Examiner for allowing claims 22, 23, 27, and 30–34.

Amendments to Claims

Claims 1, 3–12, and 28 have been canceled without prejudice. Applicants reserve the right to present the subject-matter of these claims in one or more continuation and/or divisional applications. None of the following amendments to the claims constitute new matter.

Claim 15 has been amended to incorporate claim 28, which stands objected to as dependent on a rejected base claim (claim 15), and claim 28 has been canceled. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 15 is allowable. Because claims 17–21 and 24–27 are directly or indirectly dependent on claim 15, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 17–21 and 24–27 are also allowable.

Claim 21 has been amended to delete material recited in amended claim 15.

Claim 29 has been amended to depend on claim 15. Claim 29 stands objected to as dependent on a rejected base claim. Because claim 15 is allowable for the reasons stated above, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 29 is also allowable.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim rejections over Miller, in view of Nuhring: Claims 1, 5, 6, 15, 17–19, 24, and 25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Miller (U.S. Patent No. 4,643,260), in view of Nuhring (U.S. Patent No. 777,131). Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of claims 1, 5, and 6 are moot because these claims have been canceled. Independent claim 15 has been amended to incorporate claim 28, which was objected to as dependent on a rejected base claim. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment to claim 15 overcomes the rejection. Claims 17–19, 24, and 25 are dependent on claim 15, and recite additional features. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of these claims are also overcome.

Claim Rejections over Miller, in view of Nuhring and Birk: Claims 3, 8, and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Miller, in view of Nuhring and Birk (U.S. Patent No. 5,845,716). Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections are moot because claims 3, 8, and 9 have been canceled.

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Claim rejections over Miller, in view of Nuhring and Tsuchiya: Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Miller, in view of Nuhring and Tsuchiya (EP 0 974 633 A1). Applicant respectfully submits that the rejections is moot because claim 4 has been canceled.

Claim Rejections over Miller, in view of Nuhring: Claims 7 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Miller, in view of Nuhring. Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections are moot because claims 7 and 10 have been canceled.

Claim Rejections over Miller, in view of Nuhring and Drobyshev: Claims 11 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Miller, in view of Nuhring and Drobyshev (Derwent Acc. No. 1982-28388E abstract of SU 841628B). Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections are moot because claims 11 and 12 have been canceled.

Claim Rejections over Miller, in view of Nuhring: Claims 20 and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Miller, in view of Nuhring. Claims 20 and 21 are dependent on amended claim 15, which is allowable for the reasons stated above. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 20 and 21 are also allowable for the same reasons..

Claim Rejections over Miller, in view of Nuhring: Claim 26 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Miller, in view of Nuhring. Claim 26 is dependent on amended claim 15, which is allowable for the reasons stated above. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 26 is also allowable for the same reasons.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

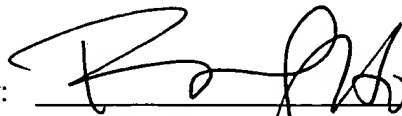
Respectfully submitted,

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Dated:

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